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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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THE MAN AND THE MUCK-RAKE.

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Mr. Joseph Bibby, the well-known Liverpool manufacturer and editor of "Bibby's Annual," has again presented us with a block for this Magazine, which our readers, we are sure, will be glad to see. The picture tells its own story.

* * *

The Clerk of the Synod, Rev. J. D. Davies, Moneyrea, Comber, would like to get the names of all ministers, elders, or representatives who intend to be present at the Synod in Dublin on June 16th and 17th, so that cheap fares may be obtained from the railway company, and Dublin friends may know how many to cater for.

* * *

There were four blind philosophers who were mighty men of philosophy, but their description of an elephant was ludicrous as compared with that of a small child who could actually see the elephant.

* * *

June, 1936, Number, published on the FOURTH Saturday of May. Copy should be in before Saturday, May 20th, at latest. Editor: Rev. John Barron, Ballywalter, County Down.

* * *

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Where there is ill-will the seeds of war find fruitful soil. Where there is selfishness, or pride, or jealousy, or suspicion, distrust and hatred, or fear, or injustice, or oppression, or cruelty of any kind, the seeds of war find fruitful soil. The individual who is in the grip of any form of ignorance of a destructive nature is contributing to war, and cannot escape responsibility. By setting friendship and freedom at naught he promotes war. — G. S. Arundale.

The Editor claims the right to edit the Magazine, "and to give none occasion to the adversary (the devil) to speak reproachfully." (I. Tim., v. 14).

* * *

Mr. Lloyd George, when introducing the Welsh Disestablishment Bill in the House of Commons, made the remark that the doctrine of Purgatory was only lost to the Church of England by the casting vote of the Speaker. The statement was greeted with an outburst of laughter, in which the late Archbishop of Canterbury, who was in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, joined heartily. Pity it wasn't "hell" they left out instead of "purgatory."

* * *

"That let us hold which everywhere, always and by all has been believed; for this is truly and rightly Catholic."—St. Vincent of Lerins.

SUBSIDY FUND.

The Treasurer begs to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the following subscription:—

A Holywood Friend, £1 0s 0d.

Contributions should be addressed to the Rev. A. Davison, Dromore, by whom they will be gratefully acknowledged.

THE DIVINE WISDOM.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.—I. Peter, 1.

U.U.C.A. ANNUAL MEETING.

The annual services were conducted by Mr. George G. Armstrong (President of the Assembly of Unitarian and other Free Christian Churches), on Sunday, April 5th, in the morning at First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, and in the evening at Holywood First Presbyterian Church. Subjects: M., "Why we go to Church"; E., "The First Commandment of All." Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Armstrong is an invalid, he spoke with great clearness and vigour, and the unanimous testimony of his hearers has been that the discourses were of a high, sincere spiritual tone.

The sixtieth annual meeting was on the Monday evening in the Central Hall. The Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Agnew, presided, and Mr. Armstrong was the principal speaker. Because of the boat leaving at 9 p.m., Mr. Armstrong's address was the first item on the programme, and was in reply to a resolution of welcome and thanks proposed from the chair, and seconded very gracefully by Miss Godding, and held the attention of the audience by its clearness and interesting narrative. Mr. Armstrong appreciated the position of having an organised Church and a separate Unitarian Association, parallel in some ways to the old Conference of Churches and the B. and F.U.A., out of which the General Assembly in England has now risen. Our own Church is in voluntary union with that Assembly, though in ecclesiastical matters apart from it. The speaker described the tour he had been taken by motor car during the day, and the day previous. Banbridge, where he was the guest of the Secretary of the Association, was the place of his father's first ministry, though that Meeting-House is now a Masonic Hall. It was in Banbridge that the Rev. Richard A. Armstrong had his windows broken because he had advocated a kindlier feeling on the part of Protestants to Roman Catholics. That day the speaker had visited the Abbey Church, Bangor, where his grandfather was rector, and from which he resigned to become a Unitarian minister at Lewin's Mead, Bristol. A tablet giving the list of clergy, headed by the abbots of early days and brought down to recent times shows the name of the Rev. George Armstrong just prior to the Disestablishment. The speaker gave some of his experiences with the English congregations, and spoke very strongly upon the hard, unyielding, narrowness and bigotry which had to be contended with not only outside, but inside many of the congregations. It had been to him a matter of intense pleasure to bring to Ireland the greetings from across the water, and he would take back their greetings and good wishes to England.

Mr. Armstrong having left the hall, the business of the meeting was then dealt with. The annual report was presented by the Secretary, proposed by Mr. C. J. M'Kissack, seconded by Mrs. Jackson, that it be received and adopted and circulated in due course.

Proposed by Rev. J. Begg and seconded by Rev. J. Barron: "That this meeting renews its adherence to the Principles and Objects of the Association, as set forth in the Rules." The seconder called attention to the fact that "The Child's Guide to Christ," a publication of the U.U.C.A., long a favourite in many households and still used in Sunday Schools, would soon be out of print, and that the matter should receive the attention of the Committee.

Rev. E. Lockett proposed, and Rev. R. N. Cross seconded: "That the retiring members of the Committee shall constitute the new Committee."

Proposed by Mr. H. Thomas and seconded: "That the best thanks of the meeting be given to the Moderator for presiding; to the Minister and Committee of the First Church, Belfast, for the use of Church and Central Hall, and also to the Minister and Committee of the First Church, Holywood, and to the ladies who arranged the tea." Benediction by Moderator.

The Bible is a high explosive. It works in strange ways, and no living man can tell or know how that Book in its journey through the world has startled the individual soul in ten thousand different places into a new life, a new belief, a new conception, a new faith.—Stanley Baldwin.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

(SUNDAY SCHOOLS—By H. J. F. Orr).

Originally Sunday Schools were intended to give secular instruction to poor children, as there was no public elementary school system like the present one.

There is a record of a Sunday School in Milan, Italy, 1580, under the clergy headed by Borromeo, afterwards a Cardinal. This probably was with the idea of properly training boys for the choirs, an idea which we will see later carried out by the "First House," Belfast, on week days.

In England Robert Raikes, a bookseller, of Gloucester, is generally credited with starting the first school in 1780. Rev. Theophilus Lindsay, afterwards minister of our Essex Church, London, had one in 1764 at Caterick, and he, too, was preceded in 1760 by two other ministers—Revs. Blair and Allein.

In Ireland laymen were credited solely with the honour. Wm. Gault, of Doagh, 1775, a Mr. Hunter, of our Crumlin congregation, about same year, and a Mr. Cleland, of Rathgael, Bangor, 1788. No church seems to have identified itself with the movement for some time. In 1780 there was a school at Rademon, but its connection with our Church there is not definitely stated. Rev. Neilson, or Nelson as it became in later generations, conducted an Academy preparing intending students for Scotch Universities, and it is not unlikely that some of these students, moved by the example of Theophilus Lindsay, and others, taught the poor children of the neighbourhood on Sunday afternoons, writing, reading and arithmetic. Unfortunately at this period there was a great deal of political unrest in Ireland, culminating in the Rebellion of 1798.

Referring to the "Drennan Letters," we find Mrs. McTier in 1796 writing to her brother, Dr. Wm. Drennan, then in Dublin—"Already the Sunday Schools are denounced as one cause of the present troubles; here at least Belfast stands free of blame, as it was never able to keep one up."

But while Belfast had not a Sunday School, the First House had started a Boys' Day School as far back as 1762. We read in "Historic Memorials," by Rev. Alexander Gordon, 21st September, 1762, a Boys' Day School is mentioned as maintained by the congregation. Reading, writing, and singing were taught, and boys in numbers varying from 14 to 19, were clothed, the expenses being met by a charity sermon on a Sunday in August or September at five o'clock to admit of the attendance of members of other denominations. The boys formed a choir in the Meeting House under the tuition of the singing clerk. Choir practice in those days were somewhat different from to-day. It was thought irreverent to sing the words of the Psalms other than for public worship, so at the practices other compositions of verses were sung. Here are two examples from Co. Down:

Tune Martyrs.

This is the tune the Martyrs sang,
When they were going to die.
When they were to the scaffold brought,
The truth to testify.

Tune York.

The reason that this tune's called York,
I never yet could know;
They might as well have called it Cork,
Carnmoney or Raphoe.

Rather curious compositions, but teaching the tune. Later, slackness on the part of choir leaders allowed substitution of ridiculous verses, such as—

Newtown is a purty place,
It stands beside the sea;
Scarbo is a great big hill,
Three times one are three.

We find a note showing the end of the school. 1771, 2nd June. — Crawford, the schoolmaster, having removed to America, his wife was continued in his place. The school was maintained until the Old Charitable Society took charge of the children some time later.

We can boast of the largest school, for in 1826 Newtownards under the Rev. Hugh Moore, reported to Synod having over 1,400 scholars. These included

all creeds, even R.C.'s. When one remembers the size of our old Meeting-House there, the wonder is where was the accommodation for such numbers. Probably in the Market House, as at that time the Londonderry family were connected with our Church and controlled the town.

The Northern Sunday School Association was formed by our Synod in 1839, and even in 1841, when other denominations had started their own schools in the town, Newtownards in its annual reports returned 403 scholars and 27 teachers, the largest in our Synod.

The First House Belfast Sunday School started 28th January, 1838, under George M'Adam as superintendent, and in 1841 returns had 250 pupils with the large number of 40 teachers. In its long history it has been fortunate in securing good superintendents and teachers. Mc. seems to figure largely, as in addition to the above G. McAdam, there has been W. H. McFadden in the 80's; J. McWilliams, 1887-1914, and P. McCrum, 1914 to date.

The 2nd House (All Souls) Sunday School started in September, 1839, and for a time ranked second only to Newtownards. Larne and Kilwaughter for a time had separate schools, 212 and 122 scholars respectively in 1841, and Newry, Dromore and Ballyclare also had prosperous schools. In the first report of the Northern S.S. Association three schools are mentioned—Collin, Gortnagallon and Upper Falls. Perhaps some of our readers can identify these. Among the missing names are Killinchy, Clough and Greyabbey. This omission may be due to the legal proceedings with the General Assembly at that period over possession of the Church buildings. Our Mountpottinger Church was started by the older scholars of a school at Felt Street, which members of York Street Church living in that district taught, aided by the Ritchie and Davidson families.

It is to the Sunday Schools that we must look for our future members, and on the teachers rest the responsibility of properly guiding our youth, so that they will become enthusiastic supporters and willing workers in our Churches.

WHO WAS JESUS?

This was the subject of Professor Hugh A. Irvine on his installation to the Chair of Hebrew in the Belfast Presbyterian College. He had, of course, assumed that the Scriptures of the New Testament would not be included in the investigation. Few would dispute regarding that answer. Harnack asserted that the Church in the early centuries had erred grievously in departing from the primitive simplicity of the Faith under compulsion of certian external forces, chiefly those of Greek philosophy. Professor Irvine alluded to the state of religion in the world, particularly inside the Roman Empire, including the cults of Isis Mithras, Cybele and many others in the first century of the Christian era. "The mystery religions had an influence, but not in this, the central doctrine of the faith: 'The Dying God.'" So Professor H. A. Irvine expresses himself, with the ability and erudition to be expected of him. But within the last fifty years fragments of a faith forgotten indicate how wide and rational the scope of early Christian teaching must have been, and that the Christian Church had its mysteries, which were rightly its own, the very centre stem of the tree, instead of being parasitical plants to be contemptuously assigned to the rubbish heap of Gnosticism. Professor Irvine says "Humanity was too small a thing to contain the historic Jesus; He had burst the bonds." Why not? Does not the unfolding flower burst the bonds of the bud and awakes thereby to a resurrection? Surely there is an inner and mystical interpretation of "Christ the first fruits!" The "flower of humanity" revealing the inherent divinity of man!

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Sir,—The number of installations which are taking place gives us reason to hope that once more every pulpit in the Non-Subscribing Church will be filled. This is a striking tribute to our Presbyterian form of Government. It is certain that without it the story of many of our congregations would be sadly different. It has allowed them all perfect liberty, yet it has guarded and preserved them and given security and dignity to our Ministry to such an extent that even the smallest of our Churches offer attractions to candidates which they do not seem to find elsewhere. It is natural that we should regard this system of Government as a priceless heritage to be preserved at all costs. Some of our congregations, however, do not appear to realise that the entire Presbyterian System rests on the position of the Minister. He is not the paid official of any group of people administering funds which they may have done nothing to raise. He is an officer of the Presbytery, appointed by it to the entire charge of the congregation, and ultimately responsible for all its affairs. At the same time, he has no authority to settle any congregational matter alone, and indeed has not even a vote in his own Session. This being the case, it might be imagined that he is in the difficult position of anyone given responsibility without authority. The Presbyterian System, however, has been too carefully designed after years of experience to place its officers in such a position. It accomplishes its object in leaving liberty to congregations, and yet giving power to its officers by one simple, yet effective rule. In brief, it is that no proceedings of the Governing Body of the Congregation are valid unless the Minister is present. The result is obvious. Should any Session or Committee propose any action dangerous to the congregation's welfare, the Minister has only to leave the meeting to prevent it. He has the power of veto. The Presbytery would then have to be approached before the action contemplated could be taken. In this way the danger of irresponsible persons taking action which might result in serious loss or damage to a Church and thereupon leaving it, is completely avoided. The Presbytery exercises its guardianship through the Minister it has appointed. Unless this power is given to the Minister the link with the Presbytery is broken. At the same time he is given nothing which is not necessary, and remains only equal to the Elders without even their power to vote.

It is unfortunate that the Code of our Non-Subscribing Church does not make this plainer than it does. Partly due to this, and partly due to a drastic experiment in congregationalism which lost us at least one Church, the position of our Ministers is sometimes questioned. When the Congregational Churches returned to the Synod after the failure of their experiment, the Synod did not insist on their Ministers taking at once their rightful place and responsibility. Other congregations took advantage of this to place their Ministers in the same position.

The situation is entirely irregular and absurd. Men cannot be held responsible for organisations in which they have no authority, and they have no right whatever to represent them in higher courts, and unless matters are set in order we shall see the whole system to which we owe our existence breaking up.

The Code is perfectly definite. Chapter II., Rule I. states that there is to be no election for the position of President of Session or Committee. Chapter III., Section 2, Rule 3 states that the Minister is Moderator of the Session of his congregation. Chapter IV., Rule 2 states that all monies are under the joint control of the Session and Committee, so that the Minister again has his place of responsibility secured, and the non-existence of other Elders does not release him from his own duty. Rule 4 of the same Chapter states that the Minister must sign the Treasurer's report, and prescribes for cases of neglect of the Minister to do so.

The question, therefore, is not open to dispute even when our own Code is appealed to. Whether such Code existed or not, we are Presbyterians and can be nothing else. We may modify certain practices as we desire and have sometimes done so, but we cannot alter

the fundamental basis of our System, and the position of the Minister is that basis. When we alter it we give up the whole System and our congregations become simply scattered units, responsible to none and going their own way.

The fact that here and there there are laymen better able to take the chair at committees than ministers, or that there are ministers unwilling, or even unfitted, to take charge of business matters is of no importance whatever. The Minister is not required to take the chair, and if any member of his committee is more fitted he may wisely allow him do to so. But the right of the Minister must be maintained in order that he may exercise the control for which he is appointed.

Both ministers and congregations pledge themselves to maintain the Presbyterian System of Church government, and the Synod should see that their pledges are fulfilled. The dignity of the Ministry itself which every wise denomination tries to secure is important, but it is nothing in comparison with the preservation of our denomination itself. Unless our Ministers are maintained in their proper positions of control as representatives of the Presbyteries, the Synod itsef will soon cease to exist. PRESBYTER.

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

The Synod meetings are to be held in the Unitarian Church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin, on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 16th and 17th, 1936.

The procedure is as follows—Ministers and representatives, elders, etc., are expected to arrive in Dublin at 12.30 p.m. on the Tuesday, and are to proceed to St. Stephen's Green for lunch. The business meeting of the Synod is to begin at 2.30 p.m. In the evening there will be a conversazione, arranged by the Dublin congregation. The speakers will be the Rev. E. Saville Hicks, M.A., and the Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A., B.D., and others.

On Wednesday a Communion Service will be held at 10.30 a.m. After the Service, the annual meeting of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster may be held.

Fuller information will be given later.

DOMESTIC MISSION.

The annual Table Tennis Tournament in which many took part, was completed a few days before Easter. The scoring was close, and resulted in a victory for Mr. W. J. Smith, who was declared winner of the silver cup.

The Debating Society concluded its winter session at the end of March. The standard of public speaking throughout the session showed commendable progress, and the members have found the meetings both educational and enjoyable. The wide range of subjects presented have enlarged the vision as well as trained the members to think for themselves.

The cup for oratory was won by Mr. J. Totten.

The Easter Services were well attended, particularly the children's rally in the afternoon, which was arranged by the Sunday School teachers. In addition to a varied musical programme given by pupils, Mr. Coats sang "My Task" most acceptably. The parents were well represented, and valued highly the untiring devotion of the teachers in the work of the school. The senior choir, under the direction of Mrs. J. Sherlock, rendered appropriate Easter music at the evening service.

With the coming of Spring our young people are making plans for the summer. Hiking is in favour, and if arrangements can be carried out, the senior boys hope to have a holiday camp. W. E.

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REPORTS.

Ballee Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—The Ordination of the Rev. Charles Simpson will take place on Wednesday, 6th May, 1936, at 3.30 p.m. Reception in the Schoolroom at 5 p.m.

* * *

Women's League, Ulster District.—The annual meeting was held at the Central Hall, Rosemary Street., Belfast, on Thursday, March 26th. The service in the First Church, at 3.15 p.m., was conducted by Mrs. Begg, of Larne, who preached a very fine, well delivered and helpful sermon. Miss M'Ninch, of Larne, presided at the organ. Tea was served in the Central Hall, after which Mrs. C. F. Andrews, of Comber, gave a most eloquent and inspiring address on "Some Thoughts of Peace." The following office-bearers were re-elected — President, Miss Armstrong ; Vice-President, Mrs. E. Thompson; Hon. Secretary, Miss E. Hind; Hon. Treasurer, Miss Laird; Fellowship Secretary, Mrs. G. Davies; Friendly Links, Miss Munn; Publicity and Publications, Mrs. F. A. Robinson.

* * *

First Presbyterian Congregation, Belfast.—At a special musical service held on Sunday evening, 29th March, 1936, selections from Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah" were sung by an augmented choir and soloists, with Mr. Albert Taylor, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., at the organ. As an introduction to the musical items, the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A., gave an interesting address on the short but intensive life of the composer, and emphasised the debt that Germany owed to the Jewish race, which had produced such men. With reference to recent events in that country, he emphatically stated that such a nation would not escape the penalty, but would yet have to face the account of its sins. Mr. J. A. Laird sang the part of Elijah with dramatic intensity, which reached a climax in "Lord God of Abraham." The tenor solos were sung by Mr. David Houston, who acquitted himself well in the parts of Obadiah and Ahab. He also sang the air "Then shall the righteous shine forth." The organ accompaniment of the latter was particularly good, as was also the Allegro vivace introduction between Ahab and Elijah. Miss L. V. Gordon's only contribution was "O rest in the Lord." This she sang with quiet dignity and deep feeling. The chorus under the leadership of Miss May Coburn had the right touch of ferocity for the Baal choruses, and much of their success was due to the brilliant work at the organ by Mr. Taylor. His organ voluntaries included an extemporisation on "The Old Hundred," and "The Answer" by Wolstenholme. The next special musical service will be on Easter Sunday, when selections from Gaul's "Holy City" will be sung.

W. H. McC.

* * *

Mountpottinger. — The Schoolroom held a crowded audience on Monday, March 23rd when a concert, promoted by Miss Adelaide Beattie was given in aid of the Church Funds. Miss Beattie had gathered round her artistes who, like herself, are known to Belfast audiences not only by their appearances on concert platforms, but also through being "on the air." The Mayfair Glee Singers were, as usual, in delightful harmony, whilst Miss Winifred Nichol and Miss Beattie herself proved to be in excellent voice. Mr. David M'Alpin sang with an easy manner, which appealed to the audience, whilst Master Robert Atkinson demonstrated how near to the female soprano a boy's unbroken voice may attain. The Mixed Voice Quartette comprised of Mrs. J. Allen, Miss A. Beattie, with Messrs. L. Watters and W. W. Wilson, proved to the audience that there are singers in the ranks of Mountpottinger members. Mr. Wm. Gillespie and his violin captured the audience, and the Irish airs were much enjoyed. No popular concert is complete without a humourist, and Mr. George Walker once again showed that people enjoy being made to laugh. Mr. Ivor G. Burns filled the role of accompanist with entire satisfaction. A very pleasing point about the entertainment was that Miss Beattie showed she had still a kindly corner in her heart for the Church where she was brought up, and where her family and relatives have proved such staunch members for many years. An appreciable sum of money has been

handed to the Church Treasurer as a result of this excellent concert.

On Wednesday, April 8th, Rev. F. and Mrs. Munford gave an "At Home" to the congregation, when a goodly number accepted the invitation. A short Whist Drive opened the evening, and the prizes were won by Mrs. E. M'Cullough and Mr. H. Beattie. Tea having been served Miss A. Beattie sang two songs in her best style. The remainder of the evening was devoted to dancing. Much regret was expressed at the fact of Mrs. Munford being an absentee owing to an attack of influenza, and the hope expressed that she would soon be out and about once more. E.R.J.

* * *

Moneyrea. — The Dramatic Society performed the Ulster comedy, "The Tame Drudge," by Geo. Shiels, on Friday and Saturday nights, March 13th and 14th, in the Lyttle Memorial School, Moneyrea, which was filled to overflowing on both occasions. The cast was as follows:—Johnny Borland, "The Tame Drudge," Frank Maxwell; Rachel Craig, "A Country Shopkeeper," Miss R. Kennedy; Aggie Craig, "Rachel's Niece," Miss Margaret M'Clure; Jamie Dobbin, "A Roadman," Thomas M'Auley; Hugh Borland, "A Farmer," James Maxwell; Thomas Hugh, "His Son," Robert Hill; Lettie, "Hugh Borland's Daughter," Miss M. M'Farland; Sam Kempton, "Hugh's Ploughman," Robert Fisher; Matt Kempton, "Sam's Son," Edward Fisher; Jemima Forgie, "A Servant Girl," Miss Margaret Strain; Ephraim Dobbin, "A Returned American," J. J. Stewart; "Asylum Official," Albert Fisher. The players are to be congratulated on their excellent work. Every one of them suited his or her part, and acted it true to nature. There was no weak or overdrawn characterisation or a flat moment in the whole performance. The performances given by this Society, which have always been immensely popular locally, have of recent years appealed to a wider field and attracted people and members of similar societies from the neighbouring counties. The players have established their reputation for good quality and are now expected to produce something new and good every winter, and their performances are looked forward to. On both nights the ladies of the congregation very kindly entertained the players to tea after the performances. On Friday evening, April 3rd, the Dramatic Society had a very successful social, at which the guests of honour were Mr. and Mrs. J. Corran, who were recently married. Mrs. Corran was an active member of the Society for many years, and was presented with a handsome clock by Mr. James Frame on behalf of the Society. Congratulatory speeches followed, and the recipient responded in suitable terms. Mr. Wm. Maxwell acted as M.C. in his usual able manner.

* * *

Belfast: First Presbyterian Church.—A grand Daffodil Party and Dance was held in the Central Hall under the auspices of the Needlework Guild, and rivalled the success of their previous effort, about 200 people being present. The hall was profusely decorated with daffodils, sent by many friends, the colour scheme being carried out with large palms lent for the occasion, and with green and yellow streamers and gay balloons. All were beautifully arranged on walls and in hanging baskets. The programme was varied with songs, recitations and exhibition dances by members of the Gardner School of Dancing, which charmed the large company by their harmonious rhythm and delicate moving grace. Liberal refreshments were provided through the generosity of the ladies, and the daffodils were afterwards distributed to a number of aged and sick folk in their own homes or in hospital. These social functions have created a record in this department of our church life, their outstanding success being due mainly to the organising energy and work of Mrs. Nicol Cross, the president, keenly and ably assisted by members of the Needlework Guild, whose meetings will continue into the summer.

Musical Services.—On Sunday night, March 30th, the organist, Mr. Albert Taylor, who is now widely known for his weekly organ recitals on the Regional wave-length, with an augmented choir, rendered selections from

Mendelssohn's "Elijah," and on Easter Sunday night from Gaul's "Holy City." The choir principals were the soloists. "The Holy City" has become an annual Easter event, its sweet, melodious music carrying a message of comfort and adoration appropriate to the sacred season.

ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL CONFERENCE.

The Annual Conference in connection with the above will be held in Comber on Saturday, June 6th, at 3.0 p.m. The speaker will be Mr. D. W. I. Jenkins, M.A., of Stranmillis College. May we remind our teachers and scholars of the Essay Competition — particulars of which are given below.

The following are the subjects for the Essay Competition for 1936:—

I.—"Give the Parable of the Prodigal Son in your own words—and its teaching."
II.—"Tell the Story of Elijah."
III.—"Truthfulness."
IV.—Is War Anti-Christian?"
V.—"Describe the Character of the Apostle Paul."
VI.—What does Nature teach about God,"

Essays are to be written on one side of paper only.

The name, age, and the Sunday School the competitor attends are to be written on front page, which must contain nothing else. Commence the Essay on the second page—front page to be detachable.

Essays of competitors over twelve years of age must be of not less than 500 words.

Essays are to reach me not later than Monday, 18th May, 1936.

REV. J. GLYNNE DAVIES,
The Manse,
Comber, Belfast.

"The identical thing that we now call the Christian Religion existed among the ancients, and has not been lacking from the beginnings of the human race until the coming of Christ in the flesh, from which moment on the true religion, which already existed, began to be called Christian."—St. Augustine.

OBITUARY.

Agnes Frazer-Lowry.

One by one the older generation at the First Church in Belfast are passing away, and it falls to record the loss of another who was well known, not only in our congregation but in Belfast, Mrs. Frazer-Lowry. For many years she took an active interest in the affairs of the Women's Unionist Council, and it is only a few months ago that in recognition of her work she was presented with a beautiful lamp by her fellow-workers, though illness prevented her from attending the function at which the presentation was made. She had been laid aside indeed for a long time, but she had remarkable vitality, and in spite of slowly increasing weakness, she showed wonderful spirit, liked to have visitors at her bedside, and would often make a shrewd and humorous remark. She follows her late husband, John Frazer-Lowry, who died about nine years ago, and she will be missed by a large circle of friends, but especially by members of her own family, including Captain Geeralde Lowry, an ostepath practising successfully in London, in spite of blindness caused during the war. To them all our sympathy goes out.

— The Unitarian and —
Free Christian Laymen's League.

BELFAST CHAPTER

meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY STREET, at 8 p.m., Third Thursday of the month, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-operation between the members of the various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not all ready members to join. The minimum subscription is 2/6, and further particulars may be obtained from—

MR. J. H. GILLILAND,
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